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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 32 | Min 29 | Humidity 42% Mainly Clear sky Sensex 75,311 | Nifty 22,795 | Gold 85,745 | Silver 96,750 | Dollar 86.61 | Euro 90.74 | GBP 109.56

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

Ramparts of Devanahalli Fort, the birthplace of Tipu Sultan are intact, but the structure and space around it are in state of disrepair

PAGE 5

DROP THAT CALL

All you need to know about how cybercriminals use Interactive Voice Response System calls to steal money from victims' bank accounts

PAGE 7

Citizens alarmed by rise in 10-minute delivery services that are forcing agents to zip past roads, throwing all rules right out of the window in their race against time

NEED FOR SPEED?

After dip in cases of footpath riding in 2023, there has been a spike in 2024

| Sanjana CS
c-sanjana.s@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

With delivery agents racing against the clock to fulfill ultra-fast 10-minute delivery targets, Bengaluru's already congested roads are facing a new menace. Concerned citizens have taken to social media to demand immediate action to curb the rising chaos, citing increased accidents and near-miss incidents caused by delivery riders speeding through crowded streets. In January alone, authorities recorded 2,309 cases of riders using footpaths.

With food and grocery delivery platforms promising rapid deliveries, the city's roads have turned into a high-stakes race track. Residents complain that delivery executives, pressured by unrealistic deadlines, often jump signals, weave through traffic dangerously, and ride on footpaths, endangering themselves and others.

PIC FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

> "We have seen a significant rise in cases of signal-jumping, rash driving, and speeding involving delivery agents. We are cracking down on violators
> — Traffic police official

Growing concern

The issue of two-wheelers riding on footpaths continues to be a concern in Bengaluru, posing risks to pedestrians and disrupting public safety. Over the years, the number of such violations has fluctuated. In 2022, the traffic police recorded a staggering 18,144 cases of vehicles using footpaths as shortcuts.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

Dust storm is brewing

Byrasandra resident goes to State Pollution Board seeking action against construction going on without any measures to reduce dust pollution

| Garima Prasher
garima.prasher@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A resident of Byrasandra in CV Raman Nagar has filed a written complaint with the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) about extreme dust from a nearby construction site.

The complainant has noted that plumes of dust have been entering homes around the construction site for a couple of months, leading to health issues among the residents.

"We the residents of Byrasandra, CV Raman Nagar, would like to highlight that we are facing dust storms from the construction work in Bagmane Tech Park Extension wing. The dust is so fine that it enters houses despite closed doors and windows. People in our society are facing health issues such as continuous sneezing and coughing," said the complaint, a copy of which is with BM.

Residents from an apartment complex adjacent to the construction site say that irresponsible construction activities have continued at the site despite numerous complaints in the past.

"On multiple occasions in the past, we have complained to KSPCB about excessive noise and dust pollution from the site

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Sporting spectacle

The Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) is hosting the ATP Challenger 125 - Bengaluru Open, showcasing top international players competing for glory. **Where: KSLTA, Cubbon Park Road; When: February 24 – March 2, 2025, 10 am**

02 Fun date

Social Sailor is organising a Terrarium Workshop Date where you can build a miniature garden together with your partner, while enjoying fun icebreaker games and socializing with other couples. **Where: Koramangala Social; When: March 1, 2 pm**

03 Theatrical delight

A Kannada play of about 100 minutes titled 'Thali' (The Breed), is being organised with the effort to explore the concept of "breed", in the context of changing values and priorities. **Where: Raga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: February 27, 7.30 pm**

04 Acting workshop

An immersive, hands-on workshop with Jeff Goldberg, designed for serious actors looking to enhance their craft and take their skills to the next level. **Where: Raga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: March 2, 4 pm**

05 Musical evening

Thaikkudam Bridge is performing live, offering a musical journey where rock, folk, and classical elements collide in a seamless fusion of sound. **Where: Courtyard, Phoenix Marketcity; When: February 28, 8 pm**

Schools' out: As merger begins, shutters for many

With future of over 50,000 students at stake, experts warn against merger, saying that move could lead to closure of thousands of schools, puts education in rural areas in peril

Sridhar Vivan
sridhar.vivan
@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @sridharvMirror

Despite strong opposition, the state government has initiated the process of merging low-enrollment primary schools, putting over 6,000 schools across Karnataka at risk of closure.

As part of the first phase to implement the model school initiative by merging smaller schools, the government has identified eight educational districts, including Shivamogga, the home district of the Education Minister, along with Karwar and Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district. Some districts have already submitted reports after identifying model schools, while others are in the process of selection.

Proposal by the School Reform Commission

An education department official said that the School Reform Commission, under the previous government, proposed that schools with fewer than 10 students fail to provide quality education and hence must be merged with nearby institutions. He pointed out that the move had faced strong opposition at the time. "Now, the state government has revived the initiative, promising to transport students from remote villages to nearby schools as part of the plan. Experts warn that this will lead to the closure of thousands of government schools," he said.

Taking count of govt. schools

23,436	Total lower primary schools
6,000	Schools with fewer than 10 students
7,821	Single-teacher schools
1,078	Schools with zero enrollment in 2023-24
1,572	Zero-enrollment schools still having teachers

Justification for the mergers

Officials argue that consolidating low-enrollment schools into model institutions will enhance education quality, while reducing financial strain.

They claim that bringing students together under one well-equipped school will ensure better learning outcomes. Notably, RV Deshpande, Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission, dismissed these claims as impractical in real-world conditions.

25% of govt schools could shut down

When the commission first proposed the merger, 3,457 government primary schools with fewer than 10 students were identified for closure.

However, a recent report indicates that the number of low-enrollment schools has reached 6,000. If all these schools are merged, 25% of government schools in Karnataka could shut down, putting the future of over 50,000 students at risk. An education department official clarified, "As per the state government's directive, details of schools eligible for merger have been submitted. The process of selecting model schools for the merger is currently underway." However, experts warn that schools that have been shut down rarely reopen, and the large-scale merger initiative could jeopardise rural education in Karnataka.

State government has revived initiative, promising to transport students from remote villages to nearby schools as part of the plan

Youth parliament showcases democracy in action

Y Maheswara Reddy
c-y.reddy@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The students of Ramagondanahalli Government High School had an opportunity to learn about local and national issues, and come up with solutions after a day of debates and discussions. The students participated in the first Youth Parliament-Our Future Our Voice held at the school, on Friday.

Preparations for the event started over a month ago, with training for Social Studies faculty and executive board by teachers and students of Inventure Academy. Further training and mentoring sessions for all selected delegates was organised after school hours by the social studies faculty at the school. In order to be equipped to effectively participate in the event, the students were trained in research, listening, and debating skills.

Over 50 delegates, clad in their best Indian formal attire got a real feel of democracy in action when they waved their placards to raise motions on the floor, questioned the ministers, MPs, and MLAs on their actions and inactions, and stood up for the rights of their constituents.

The day began with a ceremony where the delegates were addressed by their Head Mistress and the Head of Department (HOD) for History and Student Affairs at Inventure Academy, Aparajita Dutta Bannerjee.

Students were made aware of the power of their voice, and taught to use it responsibly to make a real difference in the lives of people. They were also encouraged to make the most of the opportunity to build skills like critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. It was also emphasised that they shared their point of view respectfully and with integrity.

Students take part in the Youth Parliament held on Friday

The President of the Youth Parliament Richard Joseph and Vice President Priyadarshini also addressed the students, introducing them to the Executive Board members for the day.

The sessions began at 9 am in the three committees, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and BBMP. Lok Sabha discussed the Farmers' MSP issue whereas Rajya Sabha took up a discussion on the effectiveness of reservation in jobs and education. The BBMP committee was represented by MLAs of various constituencies and officials who discussed the water crisis in Bengaluru.

As debates heated up in the first session, with delegates doing their best to represent issues faced by people in their constituencies, the Executive Board (Speaker and Deputy Speaker) in each committee stepped in effectively to keep discussions on trac, and upheld the dignity of the house.

A team of 20 volunteer students worked throughout the day to manage the logistics, ensuring smooth proceedings in all committees. A team of 6 media committee students recorded the proceedings, and are working on their report that will appear in the next edition of the school newsletter.

Pet crematorium pains making saying last goodbyes harder

BBMP-run facility not maintained well and private spaces are unaffordable; citizens call for more spaces

For pet owners in Bengaluru, bidding a final farewell to their beloved companions is a logistical and emotional challenge due to the lack of adequate cremation facilities. The city's only pet crematorium, operated by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) located in Nagarabhavi, is inaccessible for most residents, especially those in Yelahanka, Whitefield, and Hennur, forcing them to travel long distances.

The situation is further worsened by outdated contact numbers, frequent power failures, and irregular operating hours. Several pet owners reported being unable to reach the facility or finding it temporarily shut for maintenance. Those unable to access the BBMP crematorium often turn to expensive private services or, in some cases, resort to undignified disposal methods.

Pet owner Ajita Vijayan recalled her distressing experience. "Losing my dog was heartbreaking, but arranging a proper cremation was even harder. After waiting for hours and calling multiple numbers, we were told the BBMP crematorium was under repair. We had no option but to go to a costly private facility." She also urged BBMP to introduce free cremation services for strays, rescued animals, and pet owners from economically weaker sections.

Another pet owner, Purvaa, from Jayanagar, expressed disappointment over the city's lack of multiple crematoriums. "With only one facility in the entire city, saying goodbye to our pets with dignity becomes difficult. The BBMP must establish more crematoriums."

The absence of affordable, accessible, and well-maintained cremation services is an added burden for grieving families. "Despite the concerns, BBMP officials have yet to respond. However, pet owners remain hopeful that urgent action will be taken," said a pet owner.

Sandra S

History sheeter hacked to death in Shantinagar

Congress MLA NA Harris' supporter and Congress leader Haider Ali (38), a known rowdy, was brutally murdered by miscreants near the football stadium in Shantinagar on Saturday night.

Haider Ali, who had been partying late at a bar on Residency Road, was heading home in his car with a friend when five assailants, following them in another vehicle, intercepted them near the football stadium. As Haider attempted to flee from the car, the attackers attacked him with sharp weapons. They also assaulted his friend who tried to protect him, police said.

In a pool of blood, Haider Ali and his friend were rushed by locals to Bowring Hospital. However, Haider Ali succumbed to his injuries before reaching the hospital. His friend is receiving treatment and is in stable condition, police confirmed.

Haider Ali, a resident of Anepalya near Ashoknagar, was active in the Congress Party alongside his brother. Haider had been involved in criminal activities since 2014, with 11 criminal cases registered against him in various police stations. He was also listed in the rowdy sheet of Ashoknagar police station. However, senior police officers stated that he had not been involved in any criminal activities since 2022.

Supporters' Anger

As news of Haider Ali's murder spread, tension gripped Ashoknagar, Anepalya, and surrounding areas. His supporters gathered outside Bowring Hospital, pushing gates and protesting angrily. They displayed machetes and created chaos before police intervened, dispersing the crowd. HT Shekhar, DCP Central Division, said, "Haider Ali, a known rowdy, was killed while heading home after a party. The exact reason behind the murder remains unclear. Special teams have been formed to trace the suspects."

BMB

BM Finance Fundas

 # Signs of recovery: Worst seems to be behind," Indian economy shows signs of recovery, says report

Seed your bank account with UAN to get easy PF withdrawal, seamless transfer: EPFO

If you are an EPF member, you can ensure quick access to your EPF balance, seamless transfers and easy withdrawals by linking your bank account to your Universal Account Number (UAN). Bank account seeding with your UAN is important for the effective management of Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) contributions and transactions.

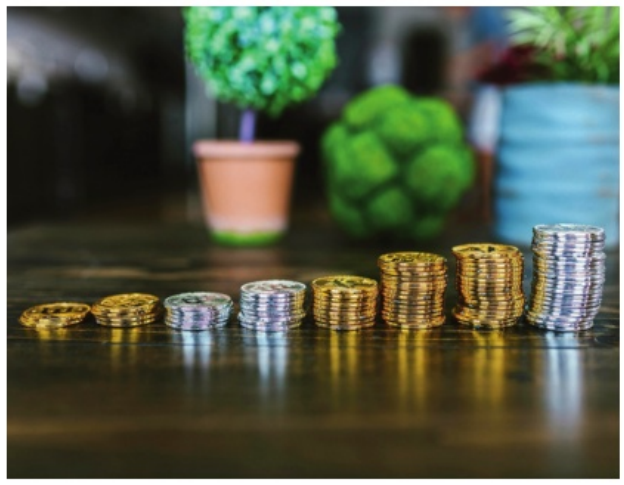
The Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) posted on social media platform X, "Bank Account Seeding with UAN simplifies managing your EPF contributions and transactions! By linking your bank account to your Universal Account Number (UAN), you ensure seamless transfers, easy withdrawals, and quick access to your EPF balance."

Linking your bank account to your UAN ensures that your monthly EPF contributions are seamlessly transferred directly into your account, providing convenient and immediate access to your funds.

This process also streamlines withdrawals and transfers of EPF balances, particularly during job transitions or retirement.

Moreover, bank account seeding enhances accessibility and transparency. It ensures compliance with Know Your Customer (KYC) regulations, adding a layer of security and minimizing the risk of fraud or unauthorised withdrawals.

What is a Universal Account Number (UAN)?



UAN is 12-digit number provided to each EPFO member. It acts as an umbrella for the multiple Member IDs allotted to an individual. This number acts as a pivot to link multiple Member Identification Numbers (Member IDs) allotted to a single member under a single Universal Account Number.

How to check and seed bank account with UAN?

To seed your bank account with your Universal Account Number (UAN), you can follow these steps:

Step 1: Log in to the EPFO member portal **(https://unifiedportal-mem.epfindia.gov.in/memberinterface/)**

Note that Aadhaar seeding with UAN is a mandatory process

Step 2: Under Manage tab, select KYC from the drop-down menu

Step 3: On the next page, you can check which bank account is seeded. If you wish, you can change the bank account seeding at this point. Enter the bank account number you want to seed.

Step 4: Confirm the bank account number and IFSC code. Click on verify IFSC tab

An OTP will be sent to your Aadhaar-linked mobile number.

Step 5: Enter the OTP. You will get a notification stating: Bank account number verification is under process.

Note that it is not necessary to seed only a salary account. You can link any bank account of your choice.

Important FAQs on bank account seeding from EPFO website

Here are some important frequently asked questions (FAQs) on seeding bank account with UAN.

Can I change my already seeded bank account number?

Yes. The bank account number can be updated any number of times by following the steps mentioned above. However, the bank account details cannot be changed during pendency of any claim with EPFO.

What precautions should I take while seeding a bank account number?

You should seed an active bank account to which you are either an individual or joint holder with your spouse. Also ensure that the bank account does not have a deposit cap greater than your withdrawal benefit.

How to link UAN with Aadhaar Using the UMANG app?

Here is how to link a UAN with Aadhaar, you can use the UMANG app or the EPFO Member Sewa Portal.

Step 1: Log in to the UMANG app using your MPIN or OTP

Step 2: Select All Services and then EPFO

Step 3: Select e-KYC services

Step 4: Select Aadhaar Seeding

Step 5: Enter your UAN and click Get OTP

Step 6: Enter your Aadhaar details You will receive an OTP on your mobile number and email

Verify the OTPs to link your Aadhaar to your UAN

Sneha Kulkarni, ET Online

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Decade-long wait ends as water supply work begins

After years of struggle and legal battles, authorities finally approve Cauvery water supply, with site owners required to pay charges to fund project

| Y Maheswara Reddy
c-y.reddy@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

After more than a decade of struggle, 300 families finally found a ray of hope on Saturday. Residents of Bangalore City Cooperative Housing Society Layout, who have long fought for basic amenities like drinking water, are now hopeful of receiving supplies on par with neighbouring layouts. The residents, led by Bangalore City Cooperative Housing Society Layout (BCCHSL) Welfare Association Secretary, Dharmendra P, have to approach the High Court and Supreme Court to solve the legal issues and get water and other amenities to the layout. It is said the layout was supposed to come under the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) jurisdiction when the Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BMP) became the BBMP in 2007.

"The land for the formation of the layout was acquired in 1990 and the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) approved the layout plan in 2001 but the layout remained excluded from the BBMP's jurisdiction due to some legal issues between landowners and the housing society. Later, we approached the court and all issues pertaining to the layout and the acquisition of the land were resolved," said Dharmendra.

On Saturday, the residents invited Yeshwanthpur MLA ST Somashekar to inaugurate the laying of water supply pipes and other works. BWSSB (Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board) engineers were also present on the occasion. The residents want the BWSSB engineers to complete the developmental works as early as possible and ensure the supply of Cauvery water supply.

High Court directs BWSSB to act per affidavit, approving Cauvery water supply for 110 villages under a Rs 208.45 crore project

"I am happy with MLA Somasekhar attending the function. The BWSSB authorities have agreed to supply Cauvery water to this layout. The earth-breaking ceremony was held on Saturday. We have been struggling a lot for water all these years. We want the BWSSB to lay new water supply pipes as the existing pipes are small and also got rusted," said BCCHSL Welfare Association President, AN Anantha Murthy.

He said that around 300 site owners out of 1,500 site owners have constructed houses at the layout. The Karnataka High Court on January 30, 2025, has disposed of a writ petition filed by the BCCHS Layout Welfare Association after directing the BWSSB to act in accordance with the affidavit filed, subject to the petitioner paying the requisite charges stated therein.

Prior to this, BWSSB Chief Engineer (Project) KN Rajiv, in an affidavit filed on January 27, 2025, stated that the approval was accorded by the state government for providing water supply facilities to 110 villages of BBMP under Phase II project amounting to Rs 208.45 crore and to meet the said project, 50 per cent of the project cost has been taken as loan from the KUIDFC and the balance 50 per is to be borne by the Board's fund. "I further submit that in view of the financial constraints to complete the project, the said subject was brought before the third Board meeting held on June 20, 2024, and it was decided that Rs 60 per sq ft was to be collected from the site owners of the BDA approved layouts, gated communities and group housing along with statutory charges for the financial year 2024-25," the BWSSB Chief Engineer said in the affidavit.

> **"We want the BWSSB to lay new water supply pipes as the existing pipes are small and also got rusted** – AN Anantha M, BCCHSL

School adopts zero waste campus model

Government school in Kattigenahalli inaugurates dry waste aggregation centre, spreads the word on garbage management

| Iffath Fathima
iffath.fathima@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Government Higher Primary School (GHPS) Kattigenahalli in Yelahanka has taken a significant step towards sustainability by adopting the Zero Waste Campus (ZWC) model under the Swachha Belaku program. The initiative is led by Vedan NGO, and supported by the SVP India Bangalore chapter.

The initiative, funded by a corporate sponsor, aims to transform the school with a model of effective waste management and environmental responsibility. The ZWC model encourages institutions to eliminate single-use items, compost wet waste, segregate dry waste into 20 categories, and channel it for recycling while ensuring that the rejected waste is sent to an empanelled vendor. Notably, the school will also generate income by selling the segregated dry waste.

The school inaugurated its Dry Waste Aggregation Centre on Friday, through interactive games themed around Zero Waste and waste management. The activity provided children with hands-on experience in sustainable practices. About the initiative, Suhasini from Vedan NGO said, "Every school has the potential to become a Zero Waste Campus. By taking small steps such as composting wet waste, segregating dry waste, and eliminating single-use plastics we can create an environmentally responsible generation."

She said that the school is setting a powerful example for other schools to follow. "By adopting similar practices, educational institutions across Bengaluru can contribute to a cleaner, more sustainable future. If every school becomes a Zero Waste Campus, imagine the impact we can create," Suhasini added.

The school has visual messaging placed around the campus to reinforce waste management awareness as part of the initiative. The newly inaugurated waste segregation shed also includes several thought-provoking displays, including an illustration of a crane covered in plastic to highlight the dangers of single-use plastics on wildlife and a depiction of a cow warning about the risks of animals consuming mixed waste that smells like food. Another board explains that it takes 22 trees to produce just one kilogram of paper, while also reminding students that a tree takes 15 years to mature. Colour-coded waste bins have been installed to guide students about proper waste disposal, and a match-the-following activity placed on doors encourages them to test their knowledge of waste segregation in a fun and interactive way.

Beyond waste management, the school has also incorporated awareness messages in its washrooms, with signboards instructing students on proper hygiene practices. Messages such as "Flush with water after using me" are placed in toilets, while reminders ensure students do not dispose of sanitary pads improperly. The initiative aims to not only promote waste reduction but also instil lifelong habits of sustainability among students.

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Footpath blocked

KR Puram

Footpath in poor condition at KR Puram Ayyappa Nagar Signal, causing obstructions.

Slabs broken

Victoria Road

Broken slabs on Victoria Road near Adarsh Opus pose a safety risk.

Road wrecked

Shivanahalli Road

Shivanahalli Road in terrible condition for over four months, with no repairs in sight.

'Beer gets costlier, but the kick isn't any stronger'

Sridhar.Vivan
@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @sridharvMIRROR

The State government's decision to hike beer prices to boost revenue has led to an unexpected outcome—beer sales have dropped by 16%, as consumers turn away due to the price increase. Effective January 20, the state government increased Additional Excise Duty (AED) on beer, leading to a price hike across all brands, from regular to premium. The cost per bottle surged by 10 to 50, with beers containing higher alcohol content witnessing a steeper rise.

Sources said that this price revision has negatively impacted beer sales, which have been declining since the hike. In the first nine months of the current financial year, the excise department failed to meet its revenue target, prompting the government to raise beer prices ahead of the budget. However, the move has frustrated beer consumers, many of whom have chosen to cut down or stop consumption altogether. Beer lovers have expressed disappointment, stating that frequent price hikes are making it unaffordable. "The government keeps increasing prices, emptying our pockets, but the kick isn't getting any stronger," said a consumer.

Price hike drives consumers to affordable brands

Beer sales drop by 45 lakh litres

According to data, between January 20 and February 20 last year, Karnataka recorded beer sales of 287.63 lakh litres (36.88 lakh boxes). This year, during the same period, sales dropped to 243 lakh litres (31.16 lakh boxes), marking a significant decline of 45 lakh litres. The drop in demand has affected both bars and retail liquor shops, leading to a reduced purchase indent from the Karnataka State Beverages Corporation. Meanwhile, domestic liquor (IML) sales have remained relatively stable, with a minor drop from 4.97 crore litres last year to 4,64 crore litres this year.

Shift towards cheaper brands

The steep price hike has driven many beer consumers to switch to more affordable brands. While demand for premium beers has declined, sales of lower-priced brands have seen an uptick. Some consumers have also reduced their purchase quantities instead of switching brands.

Push towards IML sales

An excise department official said, "The state government generates a significant portion of its excise revenue from Indian Made Liquor (IML), with beer contributing relatively less. Since IML sales yield higher revenue, the government appears to be discouraging beer sales while promoting IML consumption. Industry insiders have voiced concerns that repeated price hikes are negatively impacting the liquor business, despite the government meeting its revenue expectations through increased taxes."

Devanahalli Fort at risk: Will authorities step up?

Devanahalli Fort, Tipu Sultan's birthplace, remains in neglect despite its historical significance; historian-led heritage walk highlights need for urgent restoration to boost tourism

Sridhar.Vivan
@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @sridharvMIRROR

Despite Bengaluru's rich history, many of its heritage sites remain neglected due to a lack of proper care. One such site, located near Kempegowda International Airport, is the historic Devanahalli Fort, the birthplace of Tipu Sultan. While the fort still stands with its ramparts intact, both the structure and Tipu Sultan's birthplace are in a state of disrepair.

In an effort to raise awareness about its restoration, Shyam Kodavarthi, a tech professional turned historian, organised a Devanahalli Fort Walk. He highlighted the fort's historical significance, tracing its origins back to 1501, when it was built as a mud fort by Malla Baire Gowda. "Over time, Hyder Ali, who began as a horseman in the Wadiyar army, captured the fort on behalf of Nanjaraj, the commander of the Wadiyar forces, and later strengthened its defences. The fort eventually came under Tipu Sultan, who attempted to rename Devanahalli as Yousafabad, though the name never gained popularity. The British later took control of the fort."

Kodavarthi also shed light on Devanahalli's lesser-known heritage sites, including the Devanahalli Railway Station, built in 1915 by the British-owned Southern Mahratta Railway Company to transport gold from Kolar Gold Fields (KGF). Additionally, the area is home to abandoned British-era structures, such as the Superintendent's Office (established in 1880) and the British Sub-Registrar's Office, along with two 1,000-year-old veeragallus (hero stones) that stand as silent witnesses to history. "Despite its architectural and historical significance,

Though the fort's ramparts remain intact, the structure and Tipu Sultan's birthplace are in disrepair

Devanahalli Fort continues to languish in neglect, raising concerns about the urgent need for conservation efforts to preserve Bengaluru's rich heritage," he added.

> **"At present, a limited number of trains operate between B'luru and Devanahalli via KIA Halt Station, but these services suffer from low passenger turnout** –Sunanda D, local

A local said that the origins of this historic fort trace back centuries, with records in the Karnataka State Gazetteer indicating that Mallabhaire Gowda of Avati constructed a fort here in 1501. Over time, it fell under the control of Mysore and Maratha forces, with remnants of the original structure still visible within the present-day fort. The existing fortification boasts towering walls and bastions, and within its premises lie several ancient temples. Residents believe that revitalising and promoting the fort could have a positive impact on railway connectivity. "At present, a limited number of trains operate between Bengaluru and Devanahalli via KIA Halt Station, but these services suffer from low passenger turnout. Since the fort is located near the railway route, a well-executed restoration effort could attract more visitors, boosting both heritage tourism and railway patronage. Additionally, with affordable train fares, the route has the potential to become a budget-friendly travel option for tourists eager to explore this historic landmark," added Sunanda D, a local.

SPORT

UP Warriorz brace for Mandhana, RCB home support

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's sturdy middle-order, in-form skipper Smriti Mandhana and a partisan home crowd will be the major challenges UP Warriorz will have to face when the two teams clash in their Women's Premier League match here on Monday.

India vice-captain Mandhana has been in red-hot form, smashing five half-centuries and a ton in the last 10 matches she has played for the country and her franchise.

But the top-order batter would not like to take Deepti Sharma's side, who just picked their maiden win of the season, lightly, knowing well that Australia pace all-rounder Tahlia McGrath's power-hitting could turn tables around anytime in the contest.

However, after having made a confident start with back-to-back victories, and chasing down a 200-plus score against Gujarat Giants with plenty of deliveries to spare, Mandhana would have oodles of confidence in her side going into the contest.

Though RCB suffered a setback in their previous outing against Harmanpreet Kaur's side Mumbai Indians, it was more on account of the Bengaluru team's middle-order having an off day, though Elyse Perry stood rock-solid with a fine 81.

Overall RCB have performed remarkably well so far this season, one of the reasons they are leading the table with four points from three games and maintaining a healthy net run rate (NRR) of +0.835.

UP Warriorz, on the other hand, have not enjoyed a great start which is evident as they are placed fourth with two points from three games.

It's partly because of the team dishing out below-par performance.

After consecutive losses to Gujarat Giants and Delhi Capitals, they did manage to defeat the Delhi franchise in the return match at Bengaluru but it was more on account of individual efforts from the young right-arm pacer Kranti Goud (4/25) and Australian veteran spinner Grace Harris (4/15).

A team like RCB might prove to be a difficult customer for them. **–PTI**

Cage crunch slows efforts to capture prowling leopards

Leopard sightings rise in Yelahanka as shrinking forests push them closer; officials cite lack of staff for resuce efforts, face resource constraints, & urge precautions

Sridhar Vivan
sridhar.vivan@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @sridharvMirror

Leopard activity has resurfaced in Yelahanka taluk, with residents raising concerns over repeated incidents despite multiple complaints to the Forest Department. However, officials claim that controlling the situation is challenging due to limited resources, including just one available cage to capture the big cats across the vast northern sub-division.

(File photo) Multiple sightings of Leopard in residential areas spark concern among residents

Limited resources hindering efforts

The northern sub-division comprises Hesaraghatta Grassland (5,700 hectares), Challahalli Forest (270 acres), and Jarakabande Forest (700 acres), along with thousands of acres of agricultural land. Covering a total area of 14,000 hectares, the sub-division faces severe staff and equipment shortages, making leopard capture difficult. Though officials have requested eight additional cages from higher authorities, none have been provided so far. Despite having a dedicated leopard control team, only five field staff and three forest officers are assigned to the task. A department official admitted that the lack of manpower makes capturing the leopards an uphill battle.

Why are Leopards increasing around Hesaraghatta?

Ravi D, a wildlife activist said, "Leopards have always inhabited the Hesaraghatta Grassland. However, in surrounding areas like Nelamangala, Makali, and Doddaballapur, shrinking forests and inadequate water sources are forcing these big cats to move towards Hesaraghatta. The presence of lakes like Byatha, Kakolu, and Lingarajapuram provides leopards with a steady water supply, leading to a rise in their population. Rather than preying on cattle or goats, leopards are increasingly targeting stray dogs, which are commonly found in areas where poultry waste is dumped. Leopards are drawn to these locations due to the abundance of easy prey."

Forest Department's response

Acknowledging the shortage of cages, Hesaraghatta Range Forest Officer Shivappa Hosamani stated, "We borrow cages from Kaggalipura and Anekal when needed. A request has been sent to senior officials for additional cages, and we have received assurances that they will be provided soon. Meanwhile, false reports on social media are causing unnecessary panic among the public."

Residents fear for their safety

Leopards have been sighted in multiple locations within a single day, causing alarm among locals. Residents argue that deploying at least four to five cages in forested areas and thickets would increase the chances of capturing the leopards. "Due to staff and cage shortages, livestock continues to be killed, and people fear venturing out," said Manjunath from Sottenahalli.

Concerns over poultry waste dumping

"The indiscriminate dumping of poultry waste is attracting leopards to human settlements. Gram Panchayats must take strict measures to prevent this," said Govindaraju, a forest guard from the Bengaluru North sub-division. Meanwhile, the Forest Department has urged residents to take precautions like avoiding solitary movement in deserted areas, especially in the evening, and refraining from tethering cattle, calves, and dogs outdoors at night.

2 pilgrims killed in hit and run in Hassan

Two pilgrims walking to Dharmasthala were tragically run over by a speeding bus here on Sunday. According to police, the incident occurred on National Highway-75 near Heggadihalli in Hassan taluk.

The deceased are Suresh (60) and Kumar (55) of Anagolu village in Mandya district. Another person who was seriously injured in the accident has been admitted to Hassan district hospital and is receiving treatment. A case of negligent and rash driving was registered against the bus driver who fled the spot after the mishap. – PTI

Remembering Carlton Towers fire victims

Electrocution and kitchen gas cylinder explosions remain the leading causes of fire incidents, it was revealed on the occasion of Fire Safety Awareness and Prevention Day on Sunday. Karnataka marks the Carlton Towers fire tragedy every year on February 23. RA Venkitachalam, trustee of Beyond Carlton, emphasised critical fire hazards in India and highlighted the pressing need for better coordination between various departments and the fire brigade to mitigate such risks.

A panel on 'Leading Efforts in Fire Safety in Residential Areas' along with Cheryl Rebello of Beyond Carlton and the Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF), engaged residents in a conversation about proactive measures and collective responsibility in ensuring fire safety at home. As per the Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Services directive, the day also witnessed awareness programs including fire safety drills and lectures on fire safety at hospitals, malls and other public spaces. A two-minute silence was observed in memory of the nine victims of the 2010 tragedy and others lost in fire accidents across all Regional/District Fire Stations in Karnataka. – BMB

Karnataka commemorates Carlton Towers fire tragedy on February 23

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Photoshoot politics

The recent inspection of white topping roads has turned into a war of words between the ruling and opposition. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said, "Was the BJP Chief Minister's city round just a photoshoot session? Back then, R Ashoka was just sitting in his car and cruising around." When asked about the Leader of the Opposition, R Ashok's comment calling the city round a "photoshoot," Shivakumar responded, "The BJP only has one job – to criticise. What else do they do? We're just doing our duty. This is a huge project. Is the quality right?

Crocodile post

In a wild twist to protests, farmers in Karnataka's Afzalpur taluk showed up at the GESCOM office with an unexpected guest—a live crocodile. Spotted in a wheat field at 4 am, the reptile was lassoed, loaded onto a bullock cart, and paraded to the power office as a bold statement against the pre-dawn electricity supply that forces them to brave the dark and wild animals. Police and forest officials later rescued the crocodile, while MLA MY Patil, impressed by the farmers' guts, promised to push for a 6 am power shift—because who wants to wrestle crocs before sunrise?

Street dogs turn guardian angels

In a heartwarming twist, two street dogs in Chamnahalli, Mysuru, proved to be unlikely heroes when they stood guard over an abandoned newborn left near a fence by a drain. Instead of harming the baby, the dogs barked relentlessly, keeping other animals at bay until help arrived. Locals Jeevan and his mother Nandini, alerted by the commotion, found the infant and informed health workers. The baby was rushed to a government hospital for care, while authorities began investigating the parents. Who let the dogs out? Turns out, they were on a rescue mission!

Even god can't fix it in 2-3 years

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has sparked debate with his bold remark, emphasising that Bengaluru's transformation is no overnight miracle. Speaking at a BBMP-organised workshop on road construction, he stressed that failing to plan for better roads, pavements, and green spaces would be a great disservice to the city. Unveiling a handbook on road infrastructure, he outlined its role in tree plantation, pole installations, road designs, traffic discipline, and bus stand layouts, all aimed at streamlining and modernising Bengaluru's public spaces. While he urged for patience and long-term planning, his statement has rattled residents who are grappling with daily civic woes and demand urgent action.

₹8 lakh per kg Ruby Roman Grapes

Hold onto your fruit baskets, folks. The Koppal District Horticulture Department is rolling out the red carpet (literally) for the world's most expensive grapes—the legendary Ruby Roman, priced at a jaw-dropping ₹8 lakh per kg. This isn't just any grape—it's Japan's crown jewel, known for its plump, ruby-red glow and vitamin-packed goodness. Only 250 grams of this ultra-luxe fruit will be on display at the Fruit Exhibition & Sale Fair, so get ready for some serious fruit envy. "Grown exclusively in Japan, these grapes have been making headlines since 2008, with their price skyrocketing year after year," says Krishna Ukkund, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Koppal. "We've already wowed crowds with the world's costliest mango—the Miyazaki, and now, it's time for Ruby Roman to steal the spotlight."

— Sridhar Vivan

BM SIMPLY PUT

Today we look at how cyber criminals use IVRS to cheat people and how to protect yourself from fraud

Call of the vile

Cybercriminals are increasingly using Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) calls to scam people and steal money from their bank accounts. These fraudulent methods have become more advanced, with scammers posing as representatives from reputable organisations, such as courts, law enforcement agencies, and service providers. Many city residents have received such calls, and some cases have been reported to the cyber-crime branch of the city police. The cyber-crime police have warned people about IVRS calls, which involve pre-recorded messages and keypad prompts designed to trap victims in fraudulent schemes. A police official said, "We have received complaints that victims receive a call from an unknown number with a computer-generated voice saying, "You have received a notice from the high court. Why didn't you respond? Now press 9 to contact local police."

How to protect yourself from IVRS scams

Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) is an automated phone system that uses pre-recorded messages and sometimes voice recognition software to interact with you. If you receive an unsolicited IVR call asking for sensitive details, hang up and call the organization directly using their official contact number. Legitimate organizations will not ask for such details over an automated call. Always verify the identity of the caller before sharing any personal information and use official channels for any banking or financial transactions, such as visiting the bank's branch, using their official website, or their verified customer service numbers. Do not select options on the keypad or give out personal details during such calls.

Red flags

Be suspicious if the message creates a sense of panic and demands immediate action. If you receive a suspicious IVR call, report it immediately to your bank or the concerned organization. Be wary of messages asking for your credit card details or other sensitive information.

How scammers exploit IVRS to dupe people

Vishing: This is a phishing scam conducted over the voice channel. Scammers use pre-recorded messages that sound official, often impersonating well-known organizations like banks, credit card companies, or utility providers.

The scare tactic

The message often creates a sense of urgency or panic, claiming there is a problem with your account, suspicious activity, or an impending service disruption like a power cut. Never share your bank account details, PIN, OTP, or any other confidential information over the phone, especially through IVR calls. File a complaint with the cyber-crime branch to help authorities track and prevent such frauds.

The phony solution

The message will then offer a solution, like pressing a button to "verify your identity" or speak to a "security specialist". This is where they try to steal your personal information or financial details. Stay updated on the latest cyber-fraud techniques and educate yourself and your family about how to recognize and avoid scams. Follow guidelines and advisories issued by authorities and financial institutions to keep yourself protected.

Preliminary probe not must in graft cases

The Supreme Court said in a verdict that conducting a preliminary inquiry is not mandatory in every case lodged under the Prevention of Corruption Act and it is not a vested right of the accused. The court has said while a preliminary inquiry is desirable in certain categories of cases, including those lodged under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, it is not a mandatory pre-requisite for the registration of a criminal case.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Sandeep Mehta has said the purpose of a preliminary inquiry is not to verify the veracity of the information received, but merely to ascertain whether the said information revealed the commission of a cognisable offence.

"The preliminary inquiry is not mandatory in every case under the PC Act," the bench said in its verdict delivered on February 17.

"If a superior officer is in seisin of a source information report, which is both detailed and well-reasoned and such that any reasonable person would be of the view that it prima facie discloses the commission of a cognisable offence, the preliminary inquiry may be avoided," it said.

The top court delivered its verdict on an appeal filed by the Karnataka government, challenging a March 2024 judgment of the state high court.

The high court had quashed an FIR lodged by the Karnataka Lokayukta police station against a public servant for alleged offences under the PC Act.

The public servant was accused of acquiring assets that were disproportionate to his known sources of income. The apex court dealt with the issue of whether a preliminary inquiry was mandatory before directing registration of an FIR under the PC Act in the facts of the case or whether the source information report could be treated as a substitute for the preliminary inquiry. The court said the determination of whether a preliminary inquiry was necessary or not would vary according to the facts and circumstances of each case. **–PTI**

'Don't rake up dispute, we are all Indians'

Karnataka Ministers on Sunday urged citizens to maintain peace in Belagavi as tensions over the border dispute resurfaced. Amid the ongoing language-related controversy, the state Ministers called on the public to prevent miscreants from escalating tensions in both Karnataka and Maharashtra. "Kannadigas and Marathis are living harmoniously. Why are you unnecessarily trying to disturb it? I am appealing to the people to stop inciting," Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters.

He assured that the government would take all necessary steps to resolve the issue and warned of strict action against those causing disturbances.

State Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa asked people from both sides to remember that they are all fellow Indians, emphasising the importance of unity amidst the border dispute. Terming the development as "very unfortunate", he said, "We should never forget that we are all Indians." He denounced the tendency to rake up the issue which is long settled.

The decades-old dispute resurfaced on Friday when a bus driver and a conductor were beaten up for allegedly not speaking in Marathi at Marihal in Belagavi.

Bus service affected

Bus services between Karnataka and Maharashtra have been affected due to attacks on bus drivers from both sides in the last two days.

The bus conductor stated in his police complaint that a girl asked for a ticket in Marathi. When he said he did not know Marathi and asked her to speak in Kannada, she and her male friend attacked him. At Marihal, a group of youths intercepted the bus and beat up the conductor.

While police arrested four people for the attack, the conductor has also been booked for 'indecent behaviour' with the minor girl on a complaint filed by the girl, Belagavi Police Commissioner Yada Martin Marbaniang told reporters.

In a retaliatory act, miscreants attacked and blackened a bus driver of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) Bhaskar Jadhav at Guyilal in Hiriyur Taluk of Chitradurga district on Saturday.

Police have arrested a few who were allegedly involved in the crime.

Following the incident, the Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik on Saturday ordered the suspension of the state transport buses to Karnataka. Sarnaik said the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus, which was plying from Bengaluru to Mumbai, was attacked in Chitradurga around 9.10 pm on Friday by pro-Kannada activists. On Sunday an ultra-luxury bus belonging to the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) was disfigured with slogans like 'Jai Maharashtra', 'Marathi' and 'Maharashtra Navnirman Sena' written on it with black paint.

The KSRTC has also minimised the bus services to Maharashtra following the incident. "We have limited the number of buses going to Maharashtra for the time being and are taking all precautions to normalise the situation," a senior officer in the North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) said. **– PTI**

Builder not following CPCB guidelines on dust mitigation measures

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

during night hours. However, dust pollution has reached extreme levels since December. Our vehicles in the parking area get cleaned every morning. However, in a couple of hours, they are covered with a thick layer of dust. Our balconies are bearing the brunt of what appears like a dust storm," said another resident.

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) guidelines on dust mitigation measures on construction sites talk about dust mitigation measures due to loading/unloading operations, vehicle movement, machinery used in C & D operations, etc. It highlights that the area's Air Quality Index should comply with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

As per the guidelines, dust abatement measures in handling C&D material include sprinkling water from nozzles to suppress dust re-suspension at the site, and C&D wastes or construction material whether stored or transported to be preferably covered depending on the dust that is generated.

All areas for storing C&D wastes or construction materials are to be demarcated and preferably barricaded.

The contractors or builders associated with construction work are also supposed to ensure quantity of construction material available at the site synchronises with its utilisation so that the storage period is minimal thereby reducing dust dispersal.

Loose material that has the potential for dust generation should be stored in enclosed areas or kept in sealed bags. Moreover, barricades should be raised along the perimeter depending on the nature of adjoining regions. Dust barrier sheets such as tarpaulin and plastic on scaffolding around the construction site should be mounted.

However, locals say no dust abatement measures are being followed at the site.

"We have never seen water being sprinkled on the site to settle down dust. While construction has been going on for nearly two years, screens were never installed leading to extreme dust pollution," said the complainant.

Harmful for children and elderly: Healthcare experts

Healthcare experts say dust from construction sites is particularly harmful to children and the elderly. Even short-term spikes in dust levels can trigger breathlessness, chest tightness, and hospitalisations in those suffering from asthma, bronchitis, and other chronic lung issues.

"Children are particularly susceptible due to their developing lungs and prolonged exposure to dust particles can lead to allergic rhinitis, bronchitis, and even long-term impairments in lung function. Studies indicate that early-life exposure to airborne pollutants can predispose children to asthma and other chronic respiratory issues.

Older adults face heightened risks due to weakened immune defenses and pre-existing health conditions. Dust pollution can exacerbate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Asthma, ILD and increase the risk of pneumonia," said Dr Pavan Yadav, Lead Consultant - Interventional Pulmonology & Lung Transplantation, Aster RV Hospital.

At your doorstep in 10 minutes, but mayhem on the road

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The following year, there was a noticeable decline, with 9,547 cases reported in 2023, possibly due to increased enforcement and awareness campaigns. However, in 2024, the numbers have surged once again, reaching 12,696 cases.

Despite repeated crackdowns and penalties, the trend suggests that many riders continue to prioritise speed over safety, often disregarding traffic rules to navigate congested roads. The rise in hyper-fast delivery services has further contributed to the problem, with many delivery personnel resorting to footpaths to meet tight deadlines. As traffic officials step up their monitoring efforts, the challenge remains to enforce stricter penalties and implement long-term solutions to curb this dangerous practice.

Citizen outrage

A X user tagged an online grocery delivery portal to say, "I wasn't aware that your delivery riders had special permission to use the footpaths." In the same post, they further urged the traffic police, requesting action to curb this issue.

Last year, in November, traffic police registered 17,218 cases against delivery personnel for violations such as wrong-side driving, not wearing helmets, and jumping signals. Meanwhile, several platforms continue to roll out lightning-fast delivery deals. Commuters frequently report similar encounters, with some falling victim to reckless riders. On X, another user stated, "It's common in Brigade road and Richmond road junction, no one bothers them."

Traffic police data reveals an alarming increase in road accidents involving pedestrians . A senior officer from the traffic police confirmed, "We have seen a significant rise in cases of signal-jumping, rash driving, and speeding involving delivery agents. We are cracking down on violators."

Race for speed

The race for the fastest deliveries is heating up among platforms. Weeks after a popular food delivery app introduced its 10-minute delivery service, grocery platforms followed suit, and an online marketplace too has jumped in, promising 15-minute deliveries for various goods.

The issue has sparked a debate on whether ultra-fast deliveries are worth the risk. Citizens have taken to social media, demanding accountability from delivery platforms, with many calling for revised policies that prioritise road safety over rapid service. Another person said on X, "This is a serious menace. Many can't seem to wait for 1-2 mins for the signal to run green, but instead, will find creative ways to skip the traffic. And the most violators are riders from delivery apps. @BlrCityPolice should issue a hefty fine to these companies."

With all focus on delivery agents , a user questioned If orders are to be delivered as fast as these services promise, the delivery boys have to take shortcuts. "Either do not expect such super fast deliveries or let the boys do what they are doing. Bangalore traffic is by far one of the worst in the world. What choice do they have other than driving on the footpath? " To this, another user replied," Say to any youngsters and.. They want it within 30 microseconds of ordering. No patience. Why is 10-min delivery needed?"

With mounting public pressure, delivery companies now find themselves at a crossroads. Will they slow down to save lives, or will the race for speed continue at the cost of road safety?

Your Connect

tender & notices

COURT NOTICE

J-(Civil)-12
IN THE COURT OF SH. PANKAJ GUPTA, DJ (COMMERCIAL COURT)-01, ROOM NO 603, DWARKA COURTS, NEW DELHI
CS (COMM): 502/2024
PUBLICATION NOTICE
DEFENDANT
(Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)
STATE BANK OF INDIA
VS
PRAVEEN PRAKASH PATIL

To,
PRAVEEN PRAKASH PATIL, 3738, VINAYAK NAGAR, KHADARWADI BELGAUM, UDAYAMBAG, KARNATAKA PIN-590008 **ALSO AT:** 22, BN, ITBP CAMP, SANGAM VIHAR, DELHI-110062

Whereas you are intentionally avoiding services of summons. It is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the day of **05/03/2025 at 10.00 A.M.** i.e. The day fixed in the matter, it will be heard and determined ex-parte

Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this **10th of February, 2025** to be published in (English Edition) daily **" Bangalore Mirror "** newspaper.

Note:- Defendant should file his written statement of defense within 30 days from the date of service receipt of summons with advance copy to the plaintiff and filling of WS in commercial suit in 120 days period is mandatory and no extension can be granted.

District Judge Commercial Court
Dwarka Courts, New Delhi

real estate

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personal

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I Anjali D/O, Akhileshwar Choudhary R/o 302, 3rd Floor, Infants Anugraha, Kalkere Main Road, Opposite Sunshine School, Silver Clouds Layout, Horamavu have changed my name to Anjali Choudhary.

LOST & FOUND

DOCUMENT LOST

I, **NANDEESH**, R/at No. 11, Anugraha, Sadhashivaiah Layout, Dhananayakanahalli, Kengeri, Bangalore have misplaced my last page of original sale deed doc no: 00606 / 2005-2006 registered at Kengeri Sub Registrar office. Police complaint given vide L R No. 1489122/2025 dt. 21.02.2025 If any one finds call **8971305762.**

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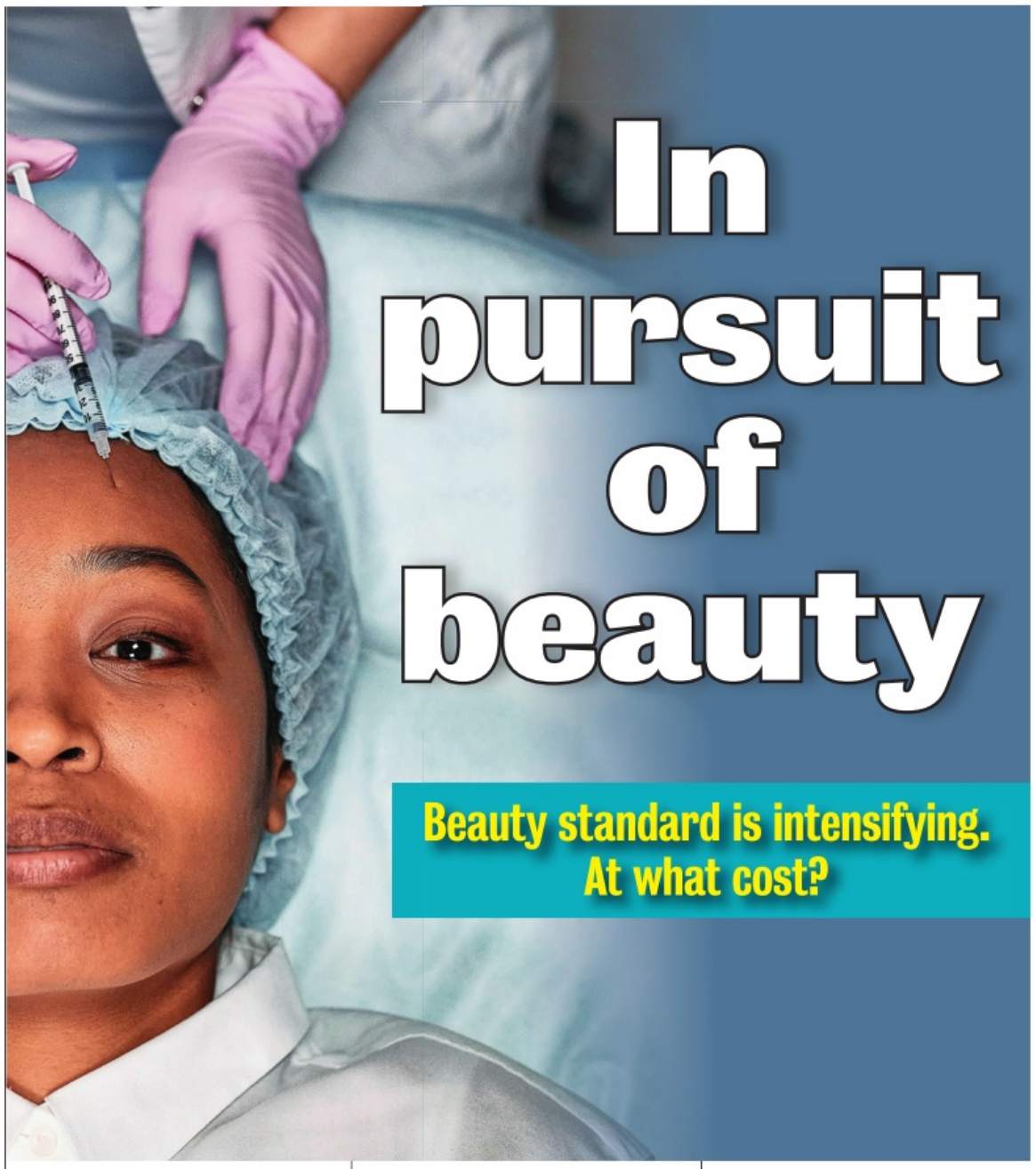


In pursuit of beauty

Beauty standard is intensifying. At what cost?

The internet is abuzz with talk of beauty and the lengths we'll go to achieve it. From Lindsay Lohan's recent transformation to Donatella Versace's "new look", those of us plugged in online can't help but gab over the rise of better, less detectable and more precise plastic surgery.

Achieved through a combination of invasive operations like face lifts and rhinoplasty as well as non-invasive procedures — like the injection of facial filler and facial neurotoxins like Botox — the contemporary beauty standard is increasingly intensive, costly and challenging to maintain. A hundred units of Botox, or its counterpart Dysport, could run clients up to $1,500 with effects diminishing in just four to six weeks.

Although women continue to make up the majority of clients seeking invasive and non-invasive beauty interventions, the number of men undergoing plastic surgery is on the rise. So too are the number of advertisements and beauty-focused messages targeting men.

But while appearance pressures and beauty advertising are increasingly directed at men, the imperative to be beautiful has come at significant emotional and financial costs for women — and young women especially.

Immersed in a celebrity-saturated and visually intensive media culture, young women today face pressures to purchase beauty products and services to manage or, better yet, perfect their appearance ad nauseam.

Social media pressures

I study beauty and its cultural forces, especially as they apply to young people online. My findings speak to the increasingly important role that beauty plays in shaping women's opportunities for visibility in both online media and in the real world. Young women are engaging in increasingly intensive practices as they aspire to new beauty standards.

I recently published an investigation with Josee Johnston, a sociologist at the University of Toronto, into the ways young people grapple with contemporary beauty standards. We looked at how their practices and purchases are compelled by current beauty standards.

For many young women, the pressure to be — or become — beautiful is top of mind. And yet the beauty standard remains elusive and painfully out of reach for most of the women and girls we spoke with. Few can afford to keep up with costly and intensive interventions to the face and body.

Relax, sculpt, lift: High-definition make-up

About 20 years ago, a needle or surgical knife to the face was considered a rather extreme intervention in pursuit of beauty. These procedures were often risky, permanent and sometimes poorly done. Today, neither knife nor needle are very unusual for those seeking a more perfect face and body.

Indeed, the injection of facial neurotoxins is among the fastest growing cosmetic procedure in Canada and the United States. The Academy of Plastic Surgeons suggests that nearly 4,715,716 procedures involving Botox were performed in 2023 alone. These numbers signal a wider shift in the production and maintenance of contemporary appearance standards, and the lengths we go to achieve them.

Alongside these figures, an ever-greater number of bodily and facial features are scrutinised. And products and services are designed to offer "high-definition" beauty in bottles, from head and toe.

Driven partly by our increasing preoccupation with celebrity images popularised by social media platforms, even everyday cosmetics like skin creams, bronzers and lip glosses are being marketed with promises to "relax", "sculpt" or "lift" facial features. These purchases from the beauty counter are being marketed to consumers as if they can achieve a surgical degree of perfection.

> **Immersed in a celebrity-saturated and visually intensive media culture, young women today face pressures to purchase beauty products**

Priced out, excluded or in debt

Many young women we spoke with described invasive facial and bodily interventions as a central component of the contemporary beauty standard. They described these interventions as compulsory, leaving many women either priced out of the beauty market or in pursuit of beauty at great personal expense.

Celebrity women can afford to purchase facial fillers and Botox to augment their appearance, such as relaxing fine lines and plumping their features. But the young women we spoke with said interventions such as these are "unattainable" for the average person, and unsustainable in the long term.

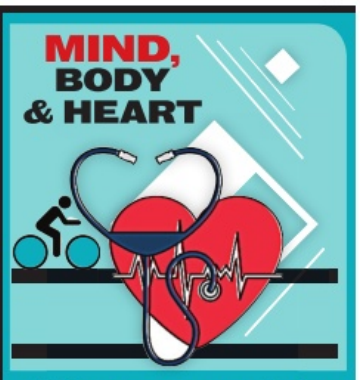
Signs of resistance

Many women we spoke with insist on the importance of appearance, especially as it relates to the likelihood of their success, and the success of other women. Few of these women made the same associations with men. In fact, many "successful" men were described by our interviewees as "plain", "unremarkable" or "ordinary".

The pressure to beautify through intensive and costly procedures is part and parcel of a broader cultural and economic environment centred on appearance. One that, as University of London sociologist Rosalind Gill puts it, measures a woman's success in terms of her looks.

However, there are small and important signs of resistance. Young women do not approach beauty and its pressures uncritically. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Many of the young women we spoke with search for spaces to resist and challenge beauty messaging as well as the cultural imperative toward facial and bodily perfection. These spaces, though few and far between, make resistance challenging but not impossible.

(By Jordan Foster, McMaster University, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Importance of optimism

Improves mental health
Developing optimism and learning how to flexibly cope can help maintain and improve mental health in diverse situations, according to a new study.

Fear is real
With social isolation, health concerns and economic uncertainty, fear and anxiety have become a daily reality for many, said the study published in the Journal of Research in Personality.

Mindset study
A team of researchers from Syracuse University and Michigan State University recently explored the personal characteristics that help people handle prolonged stressors, such as the pandemic.
Led by Jeewon Oh, assistant professor of psychology in Syracuse University's College of Arts and Sciences, the group delved into optimism and pessimism and how those mindsets influence well-being.

Facing stressors
Among their findings, they found that greater optimism promotes resilience and well-being when faced with stressors like the pandemic, while lower pessimism is linked to safer health behaviours.
"The pandemic introduced many changes, and we wanted to know more about personality traits that can help people cope with enduring and uncontrollable stressors like the pandemic. We examined optimism, because it motivates action," said Oh.
Since optimists view stressful situations positively, they are more likely to directly address the issue or try to adapt when things are uncontrollable.
This was partly because these people engaged in more physical activity and perceived more social support and less strain from their relationships, Oh added.
In general, regular optimism/pessimism isn't about thinking they wouldn't get sick, or they will be more likely to get sick (compared to others), but about knowing the reality and still thinking that things will eventually work out. —IANS

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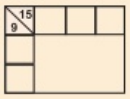
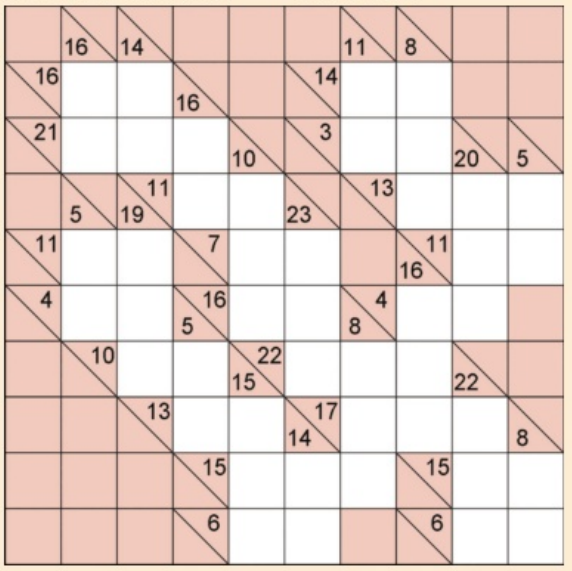
Kakuro

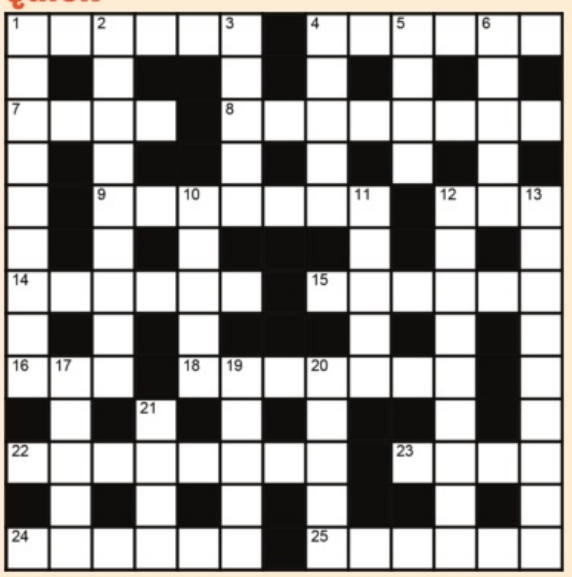
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Parallel line at 23.5 degrees latitude (6)
4 ____ Lake: Picnic spot north east of the city. (6)
7 University city in Iowa (4)
8 Agreeing, all together (2,6)
9 Studious (7)
12 21st letter of the Greek alphabet (3)
14 Forms (6)
15 Part of speech (6)
16 Standard in short? (3)
18 Dan Brown's __ ___ Code? (2,5)
22 What a lame has on the cricket field ? (5,3)
23 British jail (4)
24 Untidy states (6)
25 Fine sword (6)

DOWN

1 Passes across or over (9)
2 Go ___ : go to extremes (9)
3 Press a mouse button (5)
4 Famous mountain range in Russia (5)
5 Give the ___ : dismiss? (4)
6 Chat show hostess ___ Winfrey (5)
10 Upturned (2-3)
11 Was wearing (3,2)
12 State as a fact (9)
13 An intricate plot? (9)
17 American lake (5)
19 Spindles, revolving shafts (5)
20 A bar of metal (5)
21 A in M.A. or B.A.? (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: E EQUALS S

KMJ ZHWU XHQFWWXAWJ TVXKJVXZH ZQ GXEYZP KZ OLWNFV PXHYE XE ELTTJEE.

Linemaro

Your looks could give Julia Roberts a complex

Mindchow

Smooth waters have never made a good sailor

Joke of the day

Doctor: What's wrong with your brother?; Boy: He thinks he is a chicken. Doctor: really? How long has this been going on?; Boy: Five years.; Doctor: Five years!; Boy: We would have brought him in earlier, but we needed the eggs

Loop

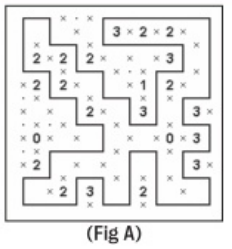
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

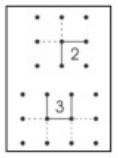
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

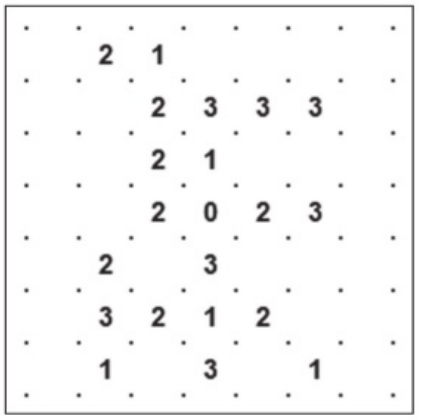
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



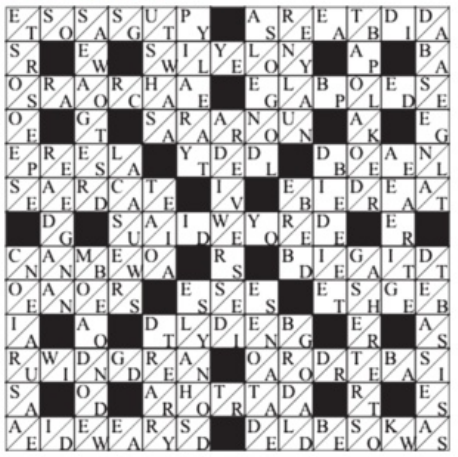
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



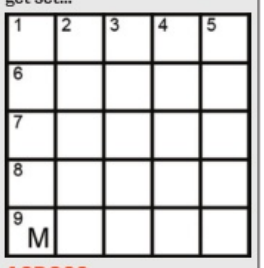
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 H Stag; 6 Thiol; 7 Toper; 8 A cape; 9 Molar

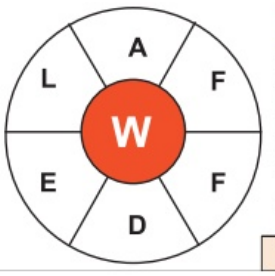
DOWN

1 Ma log; 2 Hi pop; 3 At art; 4 Cheat; 5 Loser

Mensapuzzle

Which letter completes the puzzle?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

08 Average; **09** Good; **11** Outstanding

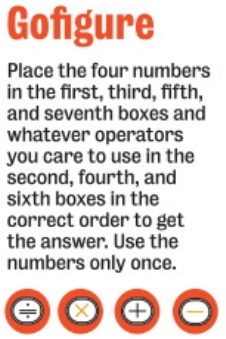
SudokuChallenge

		4			9			
		5	2	7		6		
	1						3	2
9			7		8		1	
	8			6			7	
	2		1		3			8
3	9						5	
		8		3	2	1		
			6			9		

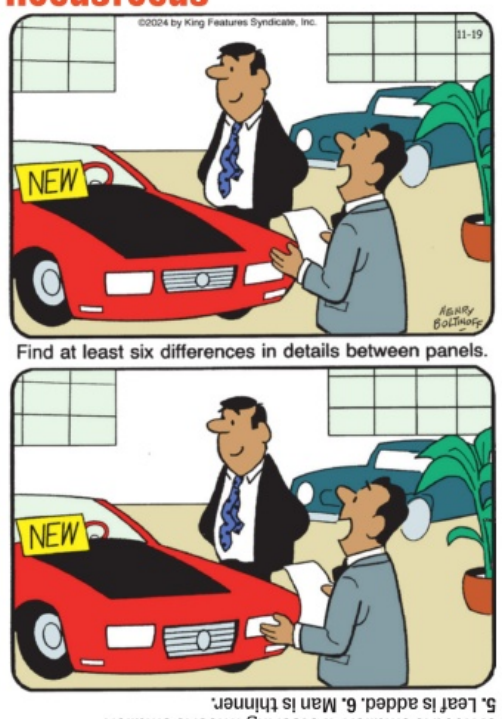
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

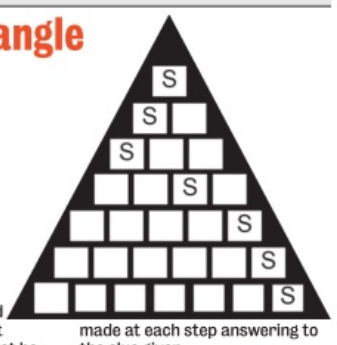
Differences: 1. Ann is lower. 2. Grille is larger. 3. Hood is smaller. 4. Steering wheel is smaller. 5. Leaf is added. 6. Man is thinner.

Riddler

From a basket of mangoes when counted in twos there was one extra, counted in threes there were two extra, counted in fours there were three extra, counted in fives there were four extra, counted in sixes there were five extra, but counted in sevens there were no extras. At least how many mangoes were there in the basket?

Alpha triangle

1 Atomic number 16
2 Thus
3 Male offspring
4 Olfactory organ
5 Traffic markers
6 Teacakes
7 Plead guilty



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

A peaceful day awaits you. You may plan to invest capital in your business, improving liquidity and financial stability. Earnings are likely to grow, boosting your overall financial health. Romantic moments with your spouse will strengthen family harmony. Singles may find a suitable match, and lovebirds might decide to marry. Students will receive blessings from good karma.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Happiness fills your day as past losses may turn into profits. Your seniors will appreciate your hard work, and career growth in the form of a promotion, position change, or new responsibilities. Hidden enemies and workplace opponents will be under control. Singles and couples may take important marriage-related decisions with support from family and friends.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

The moon's blessings bring happiness and relief as last week's challenges fade away. Hard work will finally be rewarded. With support from your subordinates, you can restart postponed tasks. Business gains will strengthen your financial position.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

A dull day may be ahead, with possible health concerns. Avoid making new business investments or starting fresh ventures, as losses are likely. Your financial gains may also convert into setbacks. It is advised to take care of your well-being and plan wisely.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

New business orders will likely bring profitability in the near future. Implementing fresh ideas at work will boost growth, and new partnerships may emerge. However, a hectic work schedule may leave you mentally exhausted, potentially affecting your domestic life. Balance is key.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Your job performance will be strong today, earning cooperation from colleagues. Postponed projects will be completed on time. Lending money for investments may be a possibility. Job seekers might secure new opportunities. Those dealing with old health issues may receive positive news about their recovery.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Life seems to be stabilizing, and people around you will start responding positively. However, do not take life as a burden—try to stay resilient in unavoidable situations. You may face difficulties in achieving easy financial gains, but blessings from elders will help you navigate challenges. Confusions regarding your goals may now be resolved.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

Tasks may remain incomplete today due to mood swings and a lack of patience. Silly mistakes could cause confusion. Lovebirds may feel uncertain about their feelings, and high expectations may create emotional distance in relationships. You are advised to take extra care of your parents. Students may struggle to concentrate.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

A cheerful day awaits, as you successfully maintain a balance between earnings and expenditures, strengthening your finances. Your network will assist in implementing plans. Siblings and subordinates will be particularly helpful today. A visit to elders or a religious place may bring peace.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Your energy levels will be high, making you optimistic and motivated to achieve your desires through hard work. Outings with friends and family may be on the agenda. Students may receive good news regarding their studies.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

The first half of the day may bring nervousness or unhappiness, but things will improve in the afternoon. A boost in internal vitality will enhance self-confidence. Avoid carelessness in financial, professional, and academic decisions. Be mindful of self-respect issues with your spouse—patience is key to preserving harmony. Lovebirds may plan a short trip together.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Overspending may impact your savings, so financial discipline is necessary. Be cautious in expressing yourself at work and home. Avoid lending money or making major decisions regarding real estate and assets. Stay committed to your responsibilities and avoid escapist tendencies.

KIDZONE

Suhasini Surendra, Bengaluru

G Anushree Bengaluru

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SOLUTIONS

RIDDLER 119. The number has to be evenly divisible by seven for there to be no extras when counting in sevens, and it has to be odd in order for there to be one extra when counting by twos. It also can't be evenly divisible by three through six. 119 is the first odd multiple of 7 that satisfies the requirements.

QUOTE UNCODE The only infallible criterion of wisdom to vulgar minds is success.

FAST FIVE

M	O	R	A	L
O	P	T	E	R
L	I	T	H	O
A	P	A	C	E
G	H	A	T	S

BULL'S EYE awed, flaw, weld flawed, flew, lewd, wade, waffle, WAFFLED, wale, weal, lawed, wafted, wafter, WAFTED, wale, weal, wealed, weld, wedel, weld, wedel, weld, wedel

 # Awards sweep
'Wicked', 'Conclave' sweep top honours at British Film Designers Guild Awards 2025

It is a love-hate relationship with social media

Saba Azad's latest crime thriller 'Crime Beat', alongside Saqib Saleem, is receiving decent reviews from critics and audiences alike. The actress recently opened up about her complex relationship with social media. Known for being particular about her career choices, she shed light on how social media presence influences casting decisions in today's entertainment industry.

In an interview with Money Control, Saba candidly shared that she has a 'love-hate' relationship with social media, admitting that she struggles to maintain consistency online. She elaborated on her unpredictable posting habits, mentioning that she might be active for a few days and then disappear for months without any updates.

Saba acknowledged the advantages of social media, especially its role in providing immediate access to real news. But, she expressed concern over the growing trend of casting actors based on their follower count rather than their acting skills or passion for the craft.

–ETimes

A quick snack

Rashmika is all of us when we feel peckish at 4 am

National Crush" Rashmika Mandanna is currently busy filming her upcoming movie 'Sikandar,' alongside Bollywood superstar Salman Khan and directed by AR Murugadoss. The makers are on a deadline as the film is announced to be released on March 28,

2025, coinciding with Eid al-Fitr. Recently Rashmika shared how she's coping with the late night shoot.

On her Instagram stories, the 'Pushpa 2' actress shared a glimpse of her night shoot, revealing her go-to snack for those early morning hours. She posted a picture of Maggie bowls, captioning it as a delightful 4 a.m. snack that makes the long night shoots much more enjoyable.

Her caption reads, "Our 4 am snack. This just makes our night shoots so much nicer." 'Sikandar' has entered its final stages of shooting. Salman Khan recently shared a new poster for the film, where he is seen in an intense look while holding a knife.

Despite rumours suggesting that Rashmika's injury might delay the film's release, Salman Khan confirmed on social media that 'Sikandar' is still on track for its March release. The film's storyline is expected to be actionpacked and engaging, making it one of the most awaited films of the year.

The film also features an ensemble cast that includes Kajal Aggarwal, Sathyaraj, Sharman Joshi, and Prateik Babbar. Rashmika is also riding high on the success of her recent film 'Chhaava,' which has been well-received at the box office. She has many projects lined up, including 'Kubera' alongside Dhanush and 'Thama'. –ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Investigative thriller

The Kannada movie Prathyartha released more than 25 years ago was directed by veteran director Sunil Kumar Desai with Ramesh Aravind playing the lead and Sudeep in a key role. Now, a movie with the same title is set to arrive in theaters on February 28.

Roaring Star Sri Murali unveiled the trailer of the movie recently. It is directed by Arjun Kamath from Karkala in Udupi district.

"Our movie Prathyartha is for all types of audiences. This movie belongs to the investigation genre. We selected the title for our movie as it is apt," Kamath said.

He said the team of Prathyartha took one year to write its story. "The script of the movie is aimed at youth. The hero's character has two shades," he said. The movie features Ram, Akshay Karkala, Shruthi Chandrasekhar, Suman Talwar, Naveen Padil, Ramesh Bhat, and Deepak Rai.

Ram said that he has also worked along with the director to write the script. "I thank the producers for investing money on this movie. I play Ayush, a college student," Ram said.

Akshay said that too associated with the script work. "I play a different character in the movie," he said.

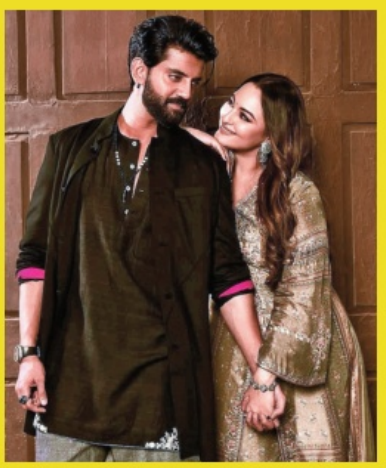
Loving banter

Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal love to pull each other's legs. Making fun of one another seems to be their love language. Recently, the 'Dabangg' actress shared a video of another fun banter with her husband on social media.

The Instagram clip features Sonakshi and Zaheer on a flight. As Zaheer invites Sonakshi to take a selfie, she starts to pose with a smile. Just then, Zaheer put up the partition between their seats, laughing. The 'Lootera' actress also asks herself a very intriguing question in the caption, "How can I fall for this every single time?!?!?".

Zaheer is often seen making appearances in Sonakshi's Instagram post. Recently, the diva shared a warning for husband Zaheer as they prepared to reunite after a week. She posted a selfie wearing a red colored tracksuit and cap on her Instagram stories. The still was accompanied by the caption, "On my way to you @ iamzahero Its been a week since I saw you…Get ready to be squished."

Earlier, Sonakshi posted a cute video of herself and Zaheer teasing each other. The clip opened with the actress sitting at the dining table



while Zaheer enjoyed some food. Zaheer offered a bite to Sonakshi, joking that it was "good carbs," but she quickly declared that she was on a diet. Just as the actress was about to take a bite, Zaheer pulled the food away, laughing, and ate it himself instead. "He knows how to test my will power… and my patience", Sonakshi captioned it.

On the work front, Sonakshi will be seen sharing the screen with Zaheer in "Tu Hai Meri Kiran". –IANS

Dexter again? Jennifer says no

The highly awaited spinoff 'Dexter: Resurrection' is all set to bring back some familiar faces; however, Jennifer Carpenter won't be one of them.

The actress, who played Debra Morgan in Dexter and its sequel, Dexter: New Blood, has said that she has no plans to reprise her role for the upcoming series.

In a recent interview with People, Carpenter shared her decision to step away from the role, stating that she feels she has "completed that box." "I am pretty focused on where I am, and I feel like I've completed that box. I'm proud of it. I hope that they're having a wonderful time," Carpenter told People.

Carpenter is currently playing US Deputy Marshal Mamie Fossett in 1923, the Yellowstone prequel. With the show now in its second season, she is dedicating her time to the new role. "And I'm so happy for the fans to have more to chew on," she added.

The original Dexter series ran from 2006 to 2013, following Michael C. Hall's character, Dexter Morgan, man with a deadly secret.

–ANI

All's well

Agriculture Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy congratulated director Nagathihalli Gangadhar Gowda for directing Kirik as he unveiled the movie's trailer at Kalavidara Sangha on Thursday. Lyricist Dr V Nagendra Prasad and Sachin, the son of Cheluvarayaswamy, released the audio of the movie.

Minister Cheluvarayaswamy said that majority of the cast and technicians of the movie are from Nagamangala. "The trailer of the movie is very promising. The quality of the trailer is an indication of the director's hard work and commitment," the minister said.

It is said the movie revolves around the hero, who works in an automobile garage, and the heroine, who is ever ready to pick a fight with others. "It is a different love story. The hero meets the heroine in a peculiar situation. Initially, both of them don't like each other but later they fall in love. I am confident of its success at the box office," said Gowda.